



THE RESPONDER

TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE • GEORGE P. BUSH, COMMISSIONER
OIL SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAM • SEPTEMBER 2015



Houston Ship Channel Closed After Naptha Spill

On June 12, 2015 at 10:00 a.m., a barge moored in Adam's Slip on the Houston Ship Channel was hit by another barge maneuvering in the area. The collision resulted in a 3' x 4' hole in the barge's starboard expansion tank and the subsequent release of 23,000 gallons of naptha into the slip. Naptha is a colorless liquid hydrocarbon with a low boiling point, low flash point, and a vapor density greater than air. As a result, a monitor and wait strategy was adopted during the initial response to this event by the Responsible Party, the Texas General Land Office, the United States Coast Guard, and the Port of Houston Fire Department.



A Houston Ship Channel collision caused significant damage to this barge, resulting in the release of 23,000 gallons of naptha into the Houston Ship Channel.

The ship channel was closed to traffic in the immediate vicinity of the spill and air monitoring assets were deployed around the scene. As predicted, the product began evaporating quickly. In this case, 100 percent of the product evaporated within 4 hours. Throughout the initial response the fire department never detected flammable vapors within the flammable range or VOCs and H₂S levels above established permissible exposure limits.



A close-up view of the damage to the barge.

Later the same day a lightering plan was completed and approved. By 6:30 a.m. the following morning, all remaining product on the barge had been removed and the barge was taken to a local shipyard for repairs.

Overall, thanks to the quick actions taken by initial responders, significant fire and health risks associated with this naptha spill were minimized, resulting in a safe, efficient, and effective response.

The Importance of Vessel Spill Prevention and Notification to the Spill Hotline

With summer winding down and recreational vessel use also slowing, remember to perform all maintenance checks and take necessary spill prevention steps on your vessel before placing it in a wet slip or boat yard.

Recently our Region 4 Brownsville office was notified by a concerned citizen in Port Isabel about an idle vessel that had been discharging diesel from a bilge pump into coastal waters, and impacting an area of waterfront homes and boat slips. Due to the diligence of the concerned citizen, responders from the Region 4 office were able to identify the leaking vessel, secure the leak and initiate a cleanup to prevent any damage to numerous recreational vessels moored in the vicinity. If this incident had not been reported in a timely manner, it could have gone unabated, impacting a larger area and resulting in a more costly cleanup. Upon further investigation the owner of the vessel was located and additional resources were brought in to mitigate the area of impact.

With the fall season upon us, please adhere to the following

prevention practices if your vessel is idle and docked in a wet slip or stored in dry dock: Go over a vessel maintenance checklist, remove excess fuel from the vessel's tanks, check all fuel/oil lines and hoses for leaks, keep the vessel's bilges clean and oil free, secure all dock lines and check the vessel weekly for any problems. Also, have a spill kit handy and make sure the state and federal spill hotlines are posted:

State - Chem-tel: 1-800-832-8224
Federal - NRC: 1-800-424-8802.



The vessel's bilge pump submerged in diesel.

EDUCATE ♦ PREVENT ♦ RESPOND

Vessel Turn-in Program Successful in Galveston County

The Texas General Land Office (GLO), in partnership with Galveston County and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), conducted a pilot vessel turn-in program (VTIP) in the San Leon/Bacliff area of Galveston County from March 3-5.

Twenty-five boats were turned in by residents of the area, for a total length of 478 feet of boats that were crushed and sent to the landfill versus making their way to our coastal waters. Boats that are illegally dumped or abandoned in coastal waters end up costing taxpayers an average of \$200 per foot to remove from the water.

The GLO first established a vessel turn-in phone line, while Galveston County ran advertisements in local newspapers and mailed information in utility bills about the program. Would-be participants called and submitted an application over the phone, and if eligible, were added to the list of the first 25 applicants to be accepted. Commercial vessels or vessels from businesses such as storage facilities or marine repair shops were not eligible to participate in the program. Perry Larvin of Galveston County, Robert Waggett of TPWD, and Craig Cook of the GLO verified ownership of the boats and how they were obtained to ensure none were



Half of the voluntarily turned-in vessels before they were crushed and transported to the county dump.

stolen or had liens on them. The GLO contracted with Phoenix Environmental to remove and dispose of all petroleum products from the boats that were turned in. The batteries were removed and recycled and any metal that could be removed was recycled as well before the boats went to the landfill. Galveston County provided the equipment to crush the boats and load them into dump trucks so they could be hauled to the landfill. The 25 boats turned in were either illegally dumped on private property, brought on to land by the surge of Hurricane Ike or no longer wanted by the owners.

The pilot VTIP program was successful, and additional VTIP operations are being planned for the City of Galveston, Brazoria County, and Galveston County over the next year. For information on the upcoming VTIP operations contact Craig Cook at the GLO Region II Oil Spill Office at 281-470-6597.



SRO II/VTIP Coordinator Craig Cook reviews paperwork on a voluntarily turned-in vessel to ensure the information provided matches the vessel.

Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Division Points of Contact

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La Porte

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La Porte, Texas
77571-9135
281.470.6597

Corpus Christi

6300 Ocean Drive, Unit 5847
Corpus Christi, Texas
78412-5847
361.825.3300

Brownsville

2145 EMS Lane
Brownsville, Texas
78521-2666
956.504.1417

Port Lavaca

414 Travis Street
Port Lavaca, Texas
77979-2351
361.552.8081

Report oil spills
800.832.8224
24 hours

The Responder is published by the Texas General Land Office.
Questions and comments may be submitted to Angela Jarvis
via email at angela.jarvis@glo.texas.gov
or by phone at 281.470.6597.

Galveston Bay Foundation's Bay Day a Huge Success

The Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division headed to Kemah on May 23rd for the Galveston Bay Foundation's annual Bay Day event promoting one of the most productive estuaries in the nation: Galveston Bay. Held on the Kemah Boardwalk, the one-day event attracts more than 5,000 children and adults to participate in arts and crafts, touch tanks with live animals, a scavenger hunt and all kinds of educational games celebrating Galveston Bay.

In between occasional rain showers, GLO staff gave skimmer demonstrations, discussed how boom helps contain a spill, and encouraged attendees to spin the always popular Oil Spill prize wheel. Located right on the water, Bay Day was a good opportunity to remind everyone of the importance of keeping recreational boats maintained and taking precautions when fueling. The event is also an excellent time to connect with other GLO environmental partners in the Houston-Galveston area and a great place to highlight Oil Spill efforts to both local and out of town audiences.

OSPRA Awards Recognize Six of the Best

Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush recently recognized six individuals who have made tremendous efforts to keep the Texas coast clean during 2014. "OSPRA Award recipients exemplify how industry and regulatory agencies can work together to protect our environment," Bush said. "The recipients represent best in class, going above and beyond to protect and preserve the Texas coast."

Jim Elliott, a retired senior Coast Guard officer and current vice-president of Galveston's T&T Salvage, was selected for partnering with the GLO to remove dozens of abandoned, sunken and grounded boats along the Texas coast. Elliott also successfully managed the salvage of Tank Barge 27706, which was struck in the Houston Ship Channel. T&T refloated the sinking barge, removed its remaining fuel, and towed it to safety within 24 hours of notification.

Charlie Henry, director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Disaster Response Center in Mobile, Alabama, was selected in recognition of his long career managing natural resource protection as a first responder. Henry has responded to more than 100 spills, including the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill and 1991 Kuwait oil fires, and was NOAA's lead scientific support coordinator for the Deepwater Horizon spill. Henry was also the driving force in the creation of the Disaster Response Center.

Emergency Management Coordinator Garret Foskit, Galveston County Office of Emergency Management; Sgt. Robert Waggett, a game warden with Texas Parks and Wildlife; and Perry Larvin, an environmental crimes detective for the Galveston County Sheriff's Office will share an OSPRA Award for their efforts in support of the state's first-ever Vessel Turn-In Program. The program is

a collaboration between the GLO, Texas Parks and Wildlife and Galveston County to provide owners of derelict boats a legal, no-cost disposal method, preventing abandoned vessels from littering coastal waterways and saving the state thousands of dollars in cleanup costs.

Lifetime Achievement

Bush tapped Texas A&M Professor Norman L. Guinasso, Jr. for special lifetime achievement recognition for his work developing an ocean current monitoring system for the gulf. Known as the Texas Automated Buoy System, or TABS, the system has become Texas' secret weapon when it comes to deploying resources to clean spills.

TABS is a network of moored current meters that measure water temperatures and surface currents along the coast. Data collected by the system is reported in real time and available to the public at <http://tabs.tamu.edu/tglo/>. TABS has proven invaluable in more than 20 major oil spills, including 2010's Deepwater Horizon spill, by helping experts predict where and when oil slicks will travel. TABS buoys provide current measurements every three hours under normal conditions and hourly during spill events. First deployed in 1995, TABS is one of the most robust coastal current monitoring systems in the world.

The OSPRA Award is presented annually by the Land Office to organizations and individuals that excel in preparedness and prevention and have been nominated by their peers in the oil spill community. The next opportunity to submit an OSPRA award nomination will be in early 2016.

Federal and State Partners Conduct Natural Disaster Recovery and Oil Spill Training

The General Land Office (GLO) recently partnered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) to offer natural disaster recovery and oil spill response training in Corpus Christi. The GLO, TCEQ, EPA, and USCG hosted a four-day training event in May covering responses to natural disasters and oil spills. The first two days consisted of natural disaster response. The Natural Disaster Operational Workgroup (NDOW), led by the EPA and TCEQ, brought together a diverse group of state and federal employees who would work together following a natural disaster under the Stafford Act. In support of the National Incident Management System (NIMS), NDOW uses existing state and federal resources and authorities, incorporating the full capabilities of all sectors to ensure effective incident response in support of community recovery. Participating entities and partners included the GLO, USCG, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Port of Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi Area Oil Spill Control Association (CCAOSCA), Refinery Terminal Fire Company, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the University of Texas – Marine Science Institute. Large-scale response to natural disasters presents special circumstances in which federal and state personnel become involved in different, more dangerous duties than they're accustomed to. The purpose of the training is to ensure that state, federal and local agencies and entities can effectively work together to meet the



USCG Pollution Responder College participants deploy boom at CCAOSCA headquarters.

same objectives. NDOW standard forms and Response Manager software are used to share information and attain synergy during a response to natural disasters.

During a natural disaster response, state and federal responders work together to conduct rapid needs assessments (RNA), in which responders evaluate the area impacted and the magnitude of the event. During an RNA, teams will record their findings using GPS coordinates, assign a name (to a specific spill source or orphaned container for example), take a photo, mark applicable containers of more than 55 gallons so they can be identified by aircraft, and enter

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Federal and State Partners Conduct Natural Disaster Recovery and Oil Spill Training

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data into a Hazard Evaluation Field Data Sheet. All data is then entered into Response Manager, which then displays a map of the impacted area and the GPS locations of each spill source or container in red. The data is easily accessible by Unified Command, which can then prioritize response efforts. As each spill source or container is picked up or cleaned, the status on the map will change to green, signifying that particular area has been cleaned. During the response, team composition is flexible and may be changed to ensure a safe and efficient cleanup as responders arrive on-scene. For example, an oil spill in coastal waters would ideally have GLO and USCG supervision, while a team consisting of TCEQ and EPA



GLO personnel demonstrating vessel operations.

personnel would respond to a hazardous orphaned container on land.

The final two days consisted of Spill Response Training hosted by the USCG. The USCG Pollution Responder College offered

hands-on training in oil spill response strategies to the 45 participants. The first day consisted of classroom review over tactics, boom deployment strategies, anchor assembly, knot tying, response methods,



GLO personnel instruct participants in boom deployment.

and equipment. The following day the class broke up into teams for field exercises at Corpus Christi Area Oil Spill Control Association (CCAOSCA) headquarters in the Corpus Christi Inner Harbor. Various booming strategies were practiced and discussed by participants. Booming strategies included shoreline protection booming, U-booming, exclusionary or protective booming, and containment booming, in which participants completely encircled a simulated leaking vessel with containment boom. A recovery station with a vacuum truck that showed how oil is removed from coastal waters was on display for educational purposes. All participants rotated through the various stations, providing a hands-on learning experience to federal and state On-Scene Coordinators.

Teach the Teachers Program

Teach the Teachers (TTT) is a General Land Office (GLO) Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division initiative to help K-12 teachers learn new ways to integrate environmental issues such as oil spill preparedness and response into their instruction. The goal is to increase educators' knowledge of coastal environments and the concepts behind cleaning up oil spills across a variety of coastal habitats. This helps teachers better understand new challenges presented to the GLO by the industry boom resulting from the Eagle Ford Shale play in South Texas. The GLO strives to provide balanced information to participants while promoting partnerships among teachers, government agencies, industry and community organizations. This helps students become knowledgeable, environmentally conscious citizens. TTT gives educators an opportu-

nity to spend time with GLO personnel and learn about the mission of the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division.

The GLO's South Texas Coastal Zone hosted one TTT event in the Corpus Christi area and another in the Brownsville area.

On July 16, the Corpus Christi-area program began in a classroom setting on the Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi campus. GLO Area Manager Jay Veselka gave a presentation on the GLO's Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division and its numerous responsibilities, including industry compliance, oil spill research and development, outreach, and education. Veselka discussed the importance of the GLO's partnerships with industry, the maritime community, environmental organizations and the general public for reducing discharges of petroleum products into coastal waters.

Following the presentation, TTT participants were split into groups. Some teachers were taken to the environmentally sensitive Lighthouse Lakes Preserve of Redfish Bay, while others took a boat tour of the Port of Corpus Christi's La Quinta Channel to learn more about industry activities and growth. The teachers rotated between the two areas to ensure all shared in the collective experience.

The Lighthouse Lakes Preserve is named after the historic Lydia Ann Lighthouse built in the 1850s. The preserve boasts 14,000 acres of pristine habitat, and the GLO works with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to promote conservation and public awareness in the area. The GLO and TPWD work together to monitor boat traffic, water quality, dredging activities, and pollution throughout the preserve. The first kayak paddling trails in Texas were established in the preserve, and the teachers were



Corpus Christi Manager Jay Veselka preparing to give a presentation to the teachers.

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Teach the Teachers Program

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given an airboat tour through mangrove-lined trails. The U.S. Coast Guard assisted the GLO with field activities. GLO personnel also discussed appropriate response methodologies across different shoreline types while showing the teachers flora and fauna that could be at risk in the event of an oil spill. The tour was highlighted by a visit to the lighthouse. The teachers were given a private tour by lighthouse keeper Billy Gaskins, who discussed facts, myths, and legends of the storied past of the lighthouse.



Teachers at the Lydia Ann Lighthouse.

The TTT program in the Brownsville area was conducted on July 22nd. In an agenda similar to that of the Corpus Christi-area program, GLO Brownsville Area Manager Raymond Oliveira gave a presentation to teachers who are currently working on Master's Degrees in Biology & Education at the University of Texas-Brownsville. Oliveira discussed GLO environmental programs such as the Derelict Vessel and Structure Removal Program and the Port Isabel Bilge Reclamation Facility—one of several locations the GLO has established for disposal of bilge water and used oil at no cost to the user. Oliveira talked about the importance of keeping bilge oil out of Texas coastal waters and being a responsible vessel owner and operator. Teachers were given a tour of GLO spill response equipment and a brief demonstration of how the equipment is used to recover spilled oil. State Scientific Support Coordinator and Director of Research & Development Steve Buschang gave a presentation on current and future oil spill prevention and response research being conducted by and/or funded by the GLO.

During the tour of La Quinta Channel, teachers were told about the importance of maritime commerce to the region, including future job opportunities for students, and how the GLO works with industry and port partners to ensure the environment is protected.

Citgo Terminals in Brownsville assists with both the classroom and field portion of the course every year. After the presentations, the program participants traveled to Port Isabel, where GLO personnel took the teachers on a field trip by air boats and safe boat to South Bay, the southernmost bay system in Texas, and the Brownsville Ship Channel.

South Bay is one of five coastal preserves in the state. The Texas Coastal Preserve Program is designed to protect unique coastal areas and fragile biological communities. The bay is located at the southernmost end of the Laguna Madre, which is one of five hypersaline lagoons/bays on earth as well as one of the most protected ecosystems in the nation. Buschang discussed the history and unique ecology of South Bay, while other GLO personnel explained how natural resources are protected and the value they add to our environment.

GLO South Texas Coastal Zone Regional Director Jimmy Martinez stressed the importance of protecting the environment and educating our children. Martinez believes learning in the classroom followed by an interactive field trip provides teachers with a unique experience and lasting impression. "Teach the Teacher helps prepare educators to bring the field into the classroom," Martinez said. "Teachers have a better understanding of how to prepare environmental lesson plans for their students. This experience helps teachers communicate what they have learned to their students."

TTT continues to grow every year. Twenty-two school districts participated this year, and educators have expressed interest in expanding the program to meet the needs of local communities. Year after year, teachers say the GLO's Teach the Teachers Program is both an exciting and educational endeavor.



State Scientific Support Coordinator Steve Buschang discusses the ecology of South Bay in the field.



Commissioner George P. Bush uses the GPS while patrolling the Houston Ship Channel with Senior Response Officer Gray Powell.



The Region 4 office receiving the Meritorious Team Award at the recent South Texas Coastal Zone Area Committee meeting at USCG Sector Corpus Christi.

Long-Time GLO Oil Spill Employees Retire

Several General Land Office employees are retiring from the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division.

Gina Bankhead, Jim Williams and Johnny Porter from the Nederland field office are retiring. Gina started in Nederland in 1994 right after she got out of the Navy. Jim started there in 2003. He had retired from Chevron and during that time got to know the program dealing with spill response and wildlife rehabilitation. Johnny Porter began working at the Land Office in 2008. He was a retired Assistant Fire Chief in Port Neches. Johnny was in charge of the marine division for the fire department so he knew the GLO program because he worked with the GLO on the water and through the local mutual aid group, Sabine Neches Chiefs Association.

Two longtime Austin-based Oil Spill Prevention and Response staffers announced their retirement effective September 30th. Peggy Spies and Bobby Rivera both have more than 30 years of service to the citizens of Texas, and both have more than 23 years of service with OSPR. Peggy ably served as the Director of Spill Case Processing and Bobby handled all financial and budget matters for the Program. To say they will be missed is indeed an understatement! They have been a part of our close-knit family almost since the inception of OSPR back in 1991. Both have made important and lasting contributions to our collective success and we wish both of them a safe and enjoyable retirement!!

D'Anne Stites will be replacing Peggy and Brian Fisher will assume Bobby's responsibilities. We welcome both to the OSPR team!!

After 23 years of serving as a Response Officer for the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Division in La Porte, Texas, Trang Vu is retiring. Trang is a true American success story. After the fall of Saigon, Trang made his way to a boat and after some time at sea was picked up by a German ship. Trang eventually made his way to America, taught himself the English language, put himself through school obtaining a Bachelor degree in Petroleum Engineering from the University of Tulsa and Masters degree in Petroleum Engineering at Texas A&M College Station. After some time in the private sector offshore petroleum industry, Trang decided to join the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Program in 1992.

Trang has been a dedicated professional and an integral part of the development and success of the Oil Spill Division. During his years of service, Trang assisted his fellow response officers and his fellow Vietnamese American citizens in communicating during response events and compliance projects, as well as translating documents for other program areas in the GLO. Trang also worked along side the USCG with their Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Program and became a certified Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Drill Instructor. Trang earned the respect of his peers for his dedicated, tenacious, and consistent work ethic. He is now taking a position with the Department of Interior's Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcements Standard Development Group as a Petroleum Engineer. Trang was a valued team member and asset to the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Division and we thank him for his 23 years of service.

The Importance of Contingency Plans

Contingency plans are developed to safeguard and prepare companies in the event of a disaster. They lay out the strategy for responding quickly and effectively to an event to minimize personnel injury and/or death, damage to the environment, business disruption, loss of revenue, embarrassment, penalties and additional regulations. The role of the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program is more than just regulatory authority for preventing oil spills. The agency conducts and participates in numerous facility/vessel spill exercises, audits and inspections to promote a positive working relationship and ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of contingency plans.

Whether developed by company employees or external plan writers, the first and foremost priority is that the plan be available and understood by everyone involved. As valuable a tool as it is, if it doesn't remain functional and updated, it will sit on a shelf and gather dust. As a general rule, contingency plans should be tailored to the vessel or facility for which they will be used. A one-plan-fits-all approach may not be as effective when an unauthorized oil discharge occurs.

The following are the top 10 problems observed during contingency plan reviews:

- ◆ Unable to locate contingency plan

- ◆ Plan contains incorrect contact numbers
- ◆ Emergency numbers go to a voice mail box
- ◆ Drill logs are not maintained
- ◆ Data is inaccurate
- ◆ GPS locations don't match the facility
- ◆ Plan contains an outdated personnel list
- ◆ Plan is generally unorganized
- ◆ Description and maps of environmentally sensitive areas are missing
- ◆ Unrealistic response strategies to contain and clean a worst case discharge

Developing and maintaining an adequate contingency plan is hard work, costly and time consuming. Significant importance must be placed on this task for it to be done effectively. Plans should be periodically tested to the greatest extent possible. After the test, modifications should be made based on gaps, lessons learned or unforeseen contingencies discovered as a result of the test. Some companies may be tempted to play the odds and forego the extra effort of creating a solid contingency plan. However, given that a company's very survival may be at issue, this investment is well worth the cost in both time and money.

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